

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SAM-01 SP-02 INR-07 PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7589

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 0606

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, AG, MO, SS, US

SUBJECT: F-5S FOR MOROCCO

1. THEME HAS REPEATEDLY CROPPED UP THAT PLANNED PROVISION BY US TO MOROCCO OF 24 F-5S REPRESENTS A NEW DEPARTURE OR STEPPING UP OF US ARMS SUPPLIES (FOR EXAMPLE IN ALGIERS 258, PARA 9). WHILE WE HAVE ALREADY MADE CASE ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN PAST THAT NEW F-5S REPRESENT CONTINUITY RATHER THAN CHANGE, FOLLOWING FACTS BEAR RECEPITULATION.

2. MOROCCAN AIR FORCE IS ALREADY EQUIPPED WITH F-5S, WHICH MAKE UP THE PRIMARY COMBAT AIRCRAFT IN CURRENT MOROCCAN INVENTORY. F-5S PRESENTLY OPERATIONAL AMOUNT TO ABOUT 10, OUT OF TOTAL OF 19 STILL ON HAND. THIS COMPARES WITH 31 MIG-21 AND 60 MIG-17S IN ALGERIAN INVENTORY. NEW F-5S THEREFORE REPRESENT BADLY NEEDED ADDITION RATHER THAN ABRUPT DEPARTURE IN TYPE OF AIRCRAFT.

3. THE 24 NEW F-5S FOR MOROCCO HAVE BEEN PROJECTED SINCE LATE 1973, AT WHICH TIME US SURVEY TEAM EXAMINED MOROCCAN PLANS FOR MODERNIZATION OF GROUND AND AIR FORCES. PRICING AND AVAILABILITY FOR THIS ACQUISITION FIRST REQUESTED BY GOM IN OCTOBER 1974 BUT THE ACTUAL PURCHASE HAS BEEN DELAYED BY BUDGETING AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS. THIS BY ANY STANDARD IS A MODEST ACCRETION IN LIGHT OF DEPLETED STATE OF MOROCCAN AIR FORCE AND PARTICULARLY
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IN COMPARISON WITH OUT-SIZED ALGERIAN CAPABILITIES.

4. EVEN FOLLOWING NEW INCREMENT OF F-5S, MOROCCAN AIR FORCE
WILL FACE INFERIORITY OF 1/5 VIS-A-VIS ALGERIANS IN COMPARABLE
COMBAT AIRCRAFT. US CAN THEREFORE CONTINUE HONESTLY TO ASSERT
IN ANY DISCUSSIONS IN ALGIERS OR WITH OTHER PARTIES THAT NEW
F-5S ARE INTEGRAL PART OF CONTINUING PROGRAM AND
WILL NOT UPSET MILITARY BALANCE IN AREA; AND THAT US INTENTION
IS NOT TO CREATE SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO ALGERIA.
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